

366 (9)
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TWO DISCOURSES,

ON THE
KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS
OF ZION'S KING,

The Only EVIDENCE of LOVE to HIM,

A N D,

ANANIAS'S REPREHENSION

A N D

EXHORTATION to SAUL.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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TWO DISCOVERIES

OF THE

REMARKS OF THE COMMISSIONERS

OF THE KING

AND OF EVIDENCE OF LOVE TO THE

A. D. 1711

REMARKS OF THE COMMISSIONERS



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TO the CHURCH of CHRIST assembling

At Hamsterly, Durham,

These TWO DISCOURSES,

Published at her request,

are Inscribed,

By *her affectionate Brethren,*

and devoted Servants,

In the Gospel of Christ,

C. WHITFIELD,

J. SLEE,

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

AT NEW-YORK

THE TWO DISCIPLES

THEY MET AT NEW-YORK

AND LONDON

BY THE DISCIPLES

AND LONDON

IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK

C. WHITTIER

NEW-YORK

P R E F A C E.

THE Authors of the ensuing Discourses think proper to apprise the world, that their appearance is in compliance with the desires of those, to whom they could deny nothing of this nature. And as they contain nothing injurious to those whose concerns lie in *peace* and *truth*, they are the more readily prevailed upon to comply with their request. How they may be received they cannot say. They have no reason, however, considering the prejudices of mankind, to expect that they will meet with general reception; much less, with general approbation. Should any be offended at their contents, they wish them to remember, that not the *persons*, but the *errors* and *iniquities* of men, are exposed. The Author of the former could have said much more upon the subject, but he forbore. *John 9.* for he is persuaded, more is said than will be well received.—The substance of both Discourses is here exhibited. The Authors, however, think themselves justified, in sometimes changing the phraseology, and adding an illustrative sentence; tho' this is but sparingly done, as those who heard them attentively will find.—Should any find themselves stimulated to take public notice of them, they need not expect the Authors to make any reply, except they advance something *new* upon the subject: for they are persuaded, that the objections to these doctrines, that have hitherto transpired, have been sufficiently refuted by learned and judicious pens. Conscious of the purest motives—unawed by the fear of being accounted singular, and prompted by a generous zeal for the honour of their GREAT REDEEMER and the interests of his spiritual kingdom,—they cheerfully commit these Discourses to the inspection of the Public.

HAMSTERLY, Sept. 2, 1779.

*The Keeping of the Commandments of Zion's King,
the only Genuine Evidence of Love to Him:*

A

FAREWEL-SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

PLUMPTON CHAPEL, CUMBERLAND;

Upon Resigning the Perpetual Curacy of that Place, August
1st, 1779.

By the REV. I. SLEE, Master of the Grammar School,
Salkeldgate.

*Here is the patience of the Saints: here are they that keep the
Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. Rev. xiv. 12.
Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the
world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to or-
dinances; — which all are to perish with the using, after the
commandments and doctrines of men. Col. ii. 20, 22.*

The Keeping of the Commandments of Christ's New
the only Genuine Religion / I have to Offer

A

FAREWELL-SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

TRUMPTON CHAPEL, CUMBERLAND;

Upon Resigning the Temporal Curacy of that Place, August
11th, 1779.

By the REV. J. SLEE, Minister of the Gospel at
Sahelburg.

There is the patience of the Spirit: but we are not to keep the
Commandments of God and the Love of Jesus Christ. 1 John 2:3, 5.
Therefore if ye be dead with Christ from the truth, ye are
world; and, as though living in the world, ye are
unfruitful;—ye will not be able to keep the
commandments and love of him. Gal. 3:12, 13.

(01)

A SERMON, &c.

JOHN XIV. 15.

If ye love Me, keep my Commandments.

GOD is love*." From this inexhaustible fountain, through the sacred channel of Emmanuel's mediation are all the blessings of our salvation derived. And, "unto the place from whence the rivers" of sovereign mercy "come, thither they return †," in all pure affections and holy obedience to the commandments of Zion's King. To keep his commandments, we are here informed, is the only evidence of our having partaken of his grace. To give this evidence, whatever difficulties may lie in the way, the least of his saints are required. And in the performance of it, whatever may be their inward weakness, and how formidable so ever their external foes, yet are they not to be discouraged. "The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench. ‡" For, when he sends trying dispensations to his dear children, he is pleased to favour them with grace to sustain the load. Yea, more, he takes them and all their concerns upon his Divine shoulders. "The eternal God is thy refuge,

* 1 John iv. 8. † Eccl. i. 7. ‡ Matt. xii. 20.

fuge, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms.*” He is pleased, from time to time, to smile upon them, and embraceth them with his mercy and goodness on every side. And thus, whilst the God of their salvation causes his face to shine upon them, unbooms himself to them, and opens unto them the inexhaustible treasures of his grace, as their afflictions abound, their consolations do much more abound. For ever blessed be his glorious Name, he never leaves his people *wholly* comfortless.

And, O how ineffably delightful and reviving is it, to the truly gracious soul, to hear the sounding of his bowels, mercies, and marvellous loving kindness!—Then, O then, the heart is pliant and flexible like melted wax, and its language is, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” “If ye love me”, says Christ, “keep my commandments.” The gracious soul replies, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, and being, by rich, free, and sovereign grace, one of those redeemed by thy most precious blood, and plucked as a brand out of the fire, I desire to be found amongst those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

The text I have selected upon this occasion, is the words of King Jesus, our adorable Redeemer, which are a part of his divine, incomparable, and unparalleled *Farewel-Sermon* to his beloved disciples.—What a holy flame of love must have glowed in the hearts of this select company, when they were hanging upon their dear Redeemer’s lips, and attending, with great eagerness, to the gracious accents, which sweetly dropped from the mouth of Him, “who spoke

* Deut. xxxiii. 27.

spoke as never man spake!"—and that at a period too, when he was going to leave, as to his bodily presence, this little tender flock of his.

The Lord Jesus, the glorious King, set upon the holy hill of Zion, foreseeing, I apprehend, (for known unto God are all things from eternity,) the various corruptions and innovations which would obtain, or take place in future times, embraceth this opportunity of inculcating a careful and universal observation of his loving commands upon his disciples, as the only evidence of love to his sacred person, as the distinguishing characteristic of true discipleship: That they being now peculiarly affected with an account of his departure, might come from under his divine discourse, like a sheet from the press, with all the stamps and lively impressions of the truths they heard, and the commands enjoined them, deeply and *indelibly* engraven upon their hearts. And, doubtless, all those who love the Lord Jesus, in sincerity, will keep all his commandments, according to the measure, not of gifts, but of grace received; for his "love constraineth us." And love is a very powerful principle.

The words before us, naturally, resolve themselves into two branches:

I. A supposition, or hypothesis,—"If ye love Me."

II. A loving command, or kind exhortation,—"Keep my commandments."

Whilst we are further meditating upon these words, pronounced by the gracious King of Zion, may we, under the kind and powerful influences of his

his blessed Spirit, experience our too contracted hearts expanding abundantly, in love to Christ ; the breadth and length, and depth and height, of whose amazing love to the children of Zion, surpasses their utmost knowledge ; that we may be filled with all the fulness of God, and, having our hearts enlarged, may run the way of His commandments.

I. A supposition,—"If ye love me." We are not, I presume, to understand our Redeemer, as questioning whether, or not, his Apostles loved him. This he well knew. But he speaks hypothetically here, in order to put them, and others, who consider themselves as his disciples, upon self-examination, that being assured of this matter, they may be stimulated to observe his precepts.

In order to perceive how far we are interested in this matter, it will be necessary to consider, who they are that love the Redeemer, and in what respects he is loved by them, and appears lovely in their eyes.

FIRST, Concerning those who love the Redeemer. The Apostle declares, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha**." What awful words are these ! And yet, however strange the assertion may appear to some, it is an undeniable truth, that there is not, naturally, a single spark of true love to Jesus Christ, in any soul born into the world. For, in consequence of Adam's transgression, "in whom we all sinned," every one comes into this vale of tears, carnal, yea wholly so : "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"† : so that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil, only evil, and that continually." Now "the carnal mind is enmity against God," yea, *enmity itself* against

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22. † Psal. li. 5.

against the Lord, and against his Anointed.* An awful picture this, indeed! and yet, whosoever thou art, that readest or hearest these words, "Thou art (by nature) the *very man*."

How then, is any soul brought to love the Lord Jesus Christ? The Apostle solves the question at once. "We love him," says the beloved disciple, "because he first loved us †" He loved his chosen ones, from everlasting, with a free and sovereign love; not on account of foreseen faith, holiness, or good works,—for these are the *effects*, and not the *cause*, of his love: He pitched his love on whom he pleased, and these he loved, *because he would ‡* love them.—Before the foundation of the world, Jesus, our Lord and our God, "was rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men" And, in the fulness of time, according to covenant transactions in the everlasting council of peace, "having made peace by the blood of his cross," and slain the law-enmity thereby; at the *set time* to favour his chosen, by his word and Spirit, he slays the natural enmity of their minds, by manifesting his love to them, and shedding it abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them §. He wins them over to himself, by the power of divine grace. He overcomes them, as one beautifully expresseth it, 'by a sweet omnipotence and an omnipotent sweetness,' and makes them willing to come unto him, in the day of his power. He draws and attracts them, magnet like, in heart and affections, to his blessed Self. Then the language of the heart is,

"Draw

* Rom. viii. 7. *ex ὅτι* being an abstract noun, is very emphatic.
 † 1 John iv. 19. ‡ Deut. vii. 7-8. § Rom. v. 10.

“Draw me, O lovely Jesus, and we (the affections) will run after thee” This divine change taking place in the soul, in regeneration, Christ, who, before, seemed to have no form, beauty, or comeliness, why he should be desired, becomes now the supreme desire of his people’s souls. “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks” so their souls pant after Christ, and his reviving and sweetly refreshing waters of life, joy, and consolation. Christ is “the chiefest among ten thousand,” in their esteem, “and altogether lovely” and amiable in their eyes; yea, he is not only *sweet and desirable* unto them, but before *all sweetnesse and desirablenesses* * whatever. Of such souls as these it may be truly said, “The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in *their* hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. THE DAY-SPRING from on high hath visited them, and they are made “light in the Lord.”

Hence it appears, That they who love the Redeemer, are such as are born again, called by divine grace, and captivated with his sacred excellencies.—They are the objects of his love, the purchase of his blood, and the workmanship of his Spirit.—We come now,

SECONDLY, To enquire, in what point of view,
and

* Cant. v. 16. *Hhicco mamettakkim ; vecullo mahhamaddim.* It is almost impossible to express the original construction, and strength of signification. The nouns are plural abstract ones, with the sign of comparison, and which I know not how to translate more accurately than in this manner;—*The mouth of him is before sweetnesse; and all of him before desirablenesses!*

and under what considerations, this glorious Object of the saints' esteem, is so lovely in their eyes. And

1. They admire, love, and delight, in his sacred person. Here they behold majesty, greatness, and splendour; in the closest conjunction with the most attracting beauty and engaging sweetness. "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth *."

Nor are they less entertained with his endearing relations, his fragrant and savoury names. They love and delight in him as the Head and Husband, Father, Friend, and Brother, of his people, whose sacred names are, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace †."

3. Nor can they think lightly of him in those important offices which he sustains for them. They are sweetly delighted with him as their Surety and Saviour—their Prophet, Priest, and King—their Shepherd, Advocate, and Kinsman—Redeemer ‡.

4. They consider him as exceedingly beautiful in the order and ordinances of his gospel. The reading and preaching of his word, singing praises, baptism, and the Lord's supper, being purely administered according to his commands, afford them a glorious prospect of their blessed Emmanuel. Upon him, in these ordinances, they wait, with a single eye to the glory of God, and the profit and edification of their souls. Nor are they disappointed: In all the order of his house he maketh his paths drop fatness. In the Lord's supper, more especially, "the King of saints is held in the galleries,"—and giveth occasion for each of his saints to say, "He brought me to the banquetting-house,

* John i. 14.

† Isa. ix. 6.

‡ Deut. xviii. Psal. cx.

ting-house, and his banner over me was love."—
Then, O then, it is, that "his love is better than
wine,—that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of
those that are asleep to speak" of their own vileness
and of his goodness; while their hearts "rejoice in
him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. How
amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! They
have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of
my God, my King in the sanctuary *."

5. They love him in his people, and esteem his
saints as the excellent in the earth, in whom is all
their delight †. These they love, whether rich, or
poor, by whatsoever character or denomination, they
are distinguished amongst men, provided they appear
to have received the grace of God in truth, bear
the image and superscription of King Jesus, and mani-
fest his life in their firm adherence to his cause and
interest.

6. And, if in these respects, he is lovely and be-
loved now, how unspeakably amiable will he be,
"when we shall see him as he is," on mount Zion a-
bove,—bear a full resemblance of him,—be arrayed
in white robes, and bear palms in our hands, as a to-
ken of everlasting victory. There shall we tune our
golden harps to the sublimest key, and, in concert with
the *blood-bought-throng*, sing that new song, which
none can learn but those that are redeemed from the
earth! When, oh! when, shall we drop those mor-
tal bodies, leave this vale of tears, and go up and
take possession, entering into the joy of the Lord, in
whose "presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right
hand are pleasures for evermore."

Lift up then, O ye disciples of the Lord, the gates of
your hearts, and be ye lifted up, O ye everlasting
doors

* Psal. xxvii.

lxxxiv. 1. lxxviii, 24.

† xvi. 8.

doors of the soul, and this King of Glory, with all the beauteous train of gifts, graces, and inestimable blessings shall enter in ! You are not straitened in him, but in yourselves. Hear, therefore, and attend unto :
 “ the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying,
 “ Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled : for my head is filled with dew, and my locks
 “ with the drops of the night. Behold, I stand at the
 “ the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice,
 “ and open the door, I will come in to him, and will
 “ sup with him, and he with me.” *

HAVING laid before you a little of the loveliness of Jesus, in that point of view, in which he is loved by his disciples, I may, with singular propriety, adopt the language of Sheba's Queen, when she had been entertained with the wisdom of Israel's sapient King :
 “ Behold, the one half of the greatness, beauty, and loveliness, has not been told you : for he exceedeth, yea, infinitely transcendeth, all that ever hath, or ever can be said upon this soul-transporting subject.—
 We now proceed——

II. To consider the import of this sacred injunction, which is built upon the hypothesis of love to Jesus Christ. “ Keep my commandments.”

FIRST, By commandments, in this place, I presume, we are not to understand the commandments of the ceremonial law. All these, which were typical of good things to his people, he was then about to abolish, and effectually did, when he died, “ the just for the unjust,” and put an end to them all, “ for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”

Nor are the *ten words*, or commandments which God gave by Moses to the children of Israel, com-

C

monly

* Cant. v. 2, — Rev. iii. 20.

monly called the moral law, *only* here intended. These are so holy, pure, and perfect, that none can keep them in this imperfect state, so as to obtain justification by them, before God. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not." And the awful language of this law to transgressors is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The wages of sin is death." But believers are delivered from the law as a covenant of works, having fled through divine grace to Christ, "who is the end, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Yet still this law of God which is holy, just, and good, is unto *them*, an everlasting rule of walk and conversation; in which view of it, they delight in it after the inward man. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."† For, though they are delivered from the law, as a covenant of works, yet are they "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," which is to be kept from a principle of love to God, and Christ, and with a view to his glory.

But, by commandments here, we are more especially to understand the commandments of Christ, in a particular sense, not in *opposition* to the moral law, nor to the *exclusion* of it, but in *distinction* from it. These are such commandments, ordinances and institutions, as King Jesus gave unto his disciples, to be kept by them, and all that came after them. For as the Law-giver in his church, he hath appointed and ordained special and peculiar ordinances, to be observed by

her,

* Gal. iii. 10. Ezek. xviii. 4. Rom. vi. ult.

† Rom. x. 4, iii. 23. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 21.

her, such as the new commandment of loving one another, baptism, the Lord's supper, and the laws of government in his kingdom. Of these he speaks, in the commission to his apostles, in the following words: "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."† Of these the apostle says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." For, in the language of Solomon, "his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace."

SECONDLY, These commandments are to be kept. "Keep my commandments." This implies, that we are to hold them fast, to keep them *doctrinally*, *preserving* them *pure* from all Antichristian innovations and corruptions whatever. The King of Zion foresaw how his followers, his *pretended* followers, at least, would transgress his law and change, or *metamorphose* his ordinances, and therefore he charges his disciples to preserve them as to the mode, subjects, and form of administration. And whoever will be at the pains to compare the scripture form and subjects of baptism and the Lord's Supper, with those of some large communities in the present day, will have reason to conclude, that, excepting the name, there is very little likeness between them. Hence, in the very midnight of Antichristian darkness, the followers of the Lamb, are distinguished from the followers of the beast, by being "*οι τηρωτες, the keepers* of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."*

Also, to keep the commandments includes an observance of them, or a *practical* subjection to them.

This

* Matth. xxviii. 20.

† Rev. xiv. 12.

This is the end of keeping them *doctrinally*, and without which, *that* will be of no avail. All the disciples of Jesus are to shew their love to him, by following him in all his holy appointments and institutions. Nor are we to let any oppositions, persecutions, or *secular considerations*, deter us from our duty in this respect.

“He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.”*

Those who *now lay* claim to the character of his disciples, and practically keep not his commandments, will find themselves *dreadfully* deceived, when they shall hear the Redeemer declare, with a frowning aspect, and a voice of thunder, “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”†

Having offered what appears to me to be the mind of the Lord, from these words:—I shall now proceed to give you some account of my reasons for resigning my office in the church of England, and then conclude with my last advice to you, from this place.

FIRST, A conscientious regard to the laws and ordinances of my precious Redeemer, so expressly enjoined in the text, constrain me to resign the exercise of that sacred office in the church of England, which I have, for some time, sustained amongst you.

But, as I would be sorry that any should think that I am offended at the “gold, silver, and precious stones,”

* Luke ix. 23, 24. † Luke vi. 46. Matth. viii. 21, 23.

stones," found therein, so I must beg leave to be explicit upon this subject.

NEGATIVELY, My reasons are not on account of her maintaining the following important doctrines :

(1.) The doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. " In the unity of this Godhead there be Three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity ; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."* This I firmly believe, being contained in the sacred scriptures.

" There are Three that bear record in heaven ; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One."† Nor

(2.) Because she asserts the true divinity of the incarnate word. " The Son, which is the word of the Father, is one Christ, very God and very Man."‡ Hear the language of unerring inspiration. " My Lord and my God. The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. God was made manifest in Flesh. This is the true God and eternal Life."§ Nor

(3.) Because she maintains the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. " The Holy Ghost is very and eternal God."|| What saith the scripture ? " Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost ? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Nor,

(4.) Because she embraceth the doctrine of eternal predestination, personal and immutable election to grace and glory. " Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ

* Art. i. † 1 John v. 7. ‡ Art. ii. § John xx. 28. i, 14, iii. 16. 1 John v. 20. || Art. v.

Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour.”* And, whatever some may think, “ The godly consideration of predestination, and of our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons. This, I apprehend, is fully supported by these scriptures. “ For whom God “ did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be con- “ formed to the image of his Son ; moreover, whom “ he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom “ he called, them he also justified ; and whom he jus- “ tified, them he also glorified.” What gigantic prowess can break this golden chain ? Again, “ God hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us, &c.” But we are chosen to salvation through “ sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth,” and I add, in *no other way*.† Nor,

(5.) Because she asserts the doctrine of original sin. “ Original, or birth-sin ; is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, who naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil.”‡ All this is proven by the sacred scriptures. “ Behold, says the man after God’s own heart, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive, or *warm me*. And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”§ Nor,

(6.) Because she holds the impotence of free will.|| “ The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, &c.”*

This

* Art. xvii. † Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 4, 5. 2 Thes. ii. 13.

‡ Art. ix. § Ps. li. 5. Eph. ii. 3. || Art. x.

This is also the doctrine of the bible: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" We are born (again) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," his spirit and grace. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."* Nor,

(7.) Because she holds Christ's satisfaction. "Christ came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by the sacrifice of himself, once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as St John says, was not in him."† And thus speak the oracles of God; "He who knew no sin was made sin (a sin-bearer, or a sin-offering) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He gave himself *αντιλυτρον*, a (*substitutionary*) a ransom for all."‡ Nor,

(8) Because she embraces the heart-reviving doctrine of justification by Christ's imputed righteousness, the comfort of which is enjoyed by the precious faith of God's elect, God's free grace gift, being applied by the Spirit of consolation, the glorifier of Jesus. "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.§" See Rom. iv. throughout, where this doctrine is fully proved. Again; This is his name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness ||." Nor,

(9.) Because she espouses the doctrine of effectual vocation by omnipotent grace. "Wherefore they that be endowed with so excellent a benefit of God, be called, according to God's purpose by his Spirit,

* Jer. xiii. 23. John i. 13. Jam. i. 18.

† Art. xv.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

§ Art. xi.

|| Jer. xxiii. 6.

Spirit, working in due season *.” “Thy people,” says the Father to Christ, “*shall* be willing in the day of thy power. All that the Father giveth me, *shall* come to me †,” or, be made to believe in me, to the salvation of their souls. Nor,

(10.) Because she holds the sanctifying agency and constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Godly persons *feel* in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things. ‡ And this is fully expressed and clearly maintained by the Apostle : “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us §. Nor,

(11.) Because she regards good works. “Good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow *after* justification,—do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit ||” This is the very doctrine of the scriptures : Let those “who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works. And let us also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful **.” Nor,

(12.) Because she embraces the comfortable doctrine of the saints perseverance in grace to eternal glory. “Godly persons, by God’s mercy, attain to everlasting felicity ††.” The language of the Holy Ghost upon this subject is : “Who are kept, by the power of God, through faith into salvation ‡‡.” I
give

* Art. xvii. † Psal. cx. 3. John vi. 37. ‡ Art. xvii. § Rom. viii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 14. || Art. xiii. ** 1 Tit. iii. 8, 14.

†† Art. xvii. ‡‡ Pet. i. 5.

give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. § I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. *"

These precious truths recited, I call the gold, silver, and precious stones, I have found in the church of England. And I declare, it is not on account of these I resign my place therein.

POSITIVELY, Because there appears to me to be much "wood, hay, and stubble" blended therewith; and, "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord †."—More particularly, among those things which are the reasons of my resignation, the following are the principal:

1. The constitution, or establishment of the church of England. She is established by human laws—has a visible, human, secular head; her courts of discipline are of a civil nature, in which almost all things are performed by secular persons ‡: Whereas the churches in the New Testament were all constituted by voluntary confederation, according to the laws of Christ—owned no head upon earth, had all discipline transacted within themselves ||—and knew nothing of spiritual courts and their various officers.

2. The church of England is of a national form, distributed by the magistrate into metropolitan, diocesan, and parochial, comprehending all the impious,

D

erroneous,

§ John x. 28. * Jer. xxxii. 40. † xxiii. 29. ‡ Art. xxxvii. We find fault, justly enough, with the Papists, about the Pope being visible head of the church; but, if churches must have a *visible head*, is not an *ecclesiastical person* more proper than a *secular one*? Learned Episcopalians can be very merry about *Pope Joan*, being at the head of the Romish community; but is there not a *similar absurdity* in placing a *woman* at the head of the English community?

|| 2 Cor. viii. 5. Eph. iv. 5. Matt. xxiii. 8—10.

erroneous, and profane, within her bowels : On the contrary, the New Testament churches were all of them congregational, or independent, including those only, who, professing faith in the Lord Jesus, walked worthy of the gospel, and were in the judgment of charity, saints and brethren in the Lord *.

3. The clergy of the church of England, are not only, in general, irregular in their lives †, but most of them erroneous in their doctrines ; and instead of explaining the scriptures, and preaching the doctrines they have subscribed and sworn to in the articles, pelagianism, arianism, arminianism, and socinianism, or a little refined heathenism, or dry morality, are the only subjects with which many parishes are entertained. And what communion can be enjoyed with such ?

4. The ordinance of baptism, as it is used in the Church of England, is wholly unscriptural. For—1. Notwithstanding the rubrick enjoins *dipping*, according to the scriptures, yet sprinkling, or pouring, is now universally practised. And tho' in my ignorance I have done it, yet now I dare no longer declare in the presence of a heart-searching, lie-avenging God, that "I baptize, i. e. *dip*, or *immerse* thee, &c" when I am only sprinkling, or pouring from a basin, a few drops of water upon the face.—2. After the most accurate investigation of the New Testament, I can find neither command, precedent, nor certain consequence

* Rom. i. 1 Cor. i. 2 Cor. i. &c.

† What an awful, worthless, profane character, is a swearing drunken, clergyman ? And are there *none such* in the church of England ? How dare such persons attempt the instruction of others ? "Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou not *thyself* ?—But unto the wicked God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare of my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant *in thy mouth* ?"

quence for baptizing infants ; in that sacred book, I find none but those who professed repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ, were admitted to this holy ordinance.—3. I cannot, in conscience, after the performance of this work, declare, that “ the child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ’s church, nor declare unto God, that it hath pleased him “ to regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit : ” —all which implies that it confers grace, *ex opere operato* * ; a sentiment justly detested by all true protestants.

That this is the real meaning of these words appears from the rubric, wherein we read, “ It is certain by God’s word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved,”—and in the catechism the child is taught to say, “ in baptism—I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven †.” For any thing I know, all infants, dying such, are saved ; but it is not baptism that saveth, maketh children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven, but the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.—1. As to the substitution of sponsors, or as they are profanely called, God-fathers and God-mothers, to answer for the child, with all its † appendages, it has appeared to me an odd affair, ever since

* i. e. from the work done.

† Baptism, and Catech.

‡ Whoever seriously reflects upon the feasting, drinking, dancing, and other Bacchanalian merriments so common at many christenings, will be persuaded that this is not looked upon as a Divine Ordinance among the episcopal clergy and their people. Are the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the Devil and his works, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh renounced,—the articles of the Christian faith believed and God’s holy will and commandments kept, by these christening guests ? If so, by whom are the first indulged—the next disbelieved—and the last broken.

I was, in any measure, acquainted with the holy scriptures. Not the least shadow of such a thing is to be found there.

5. The ordinance of the Lord's supper, as administered in this community, is liable to similar objections. For, 1. The persons admitted to the communion, are all the parish, who are required to communicate three times a-year *. And it is notorious to all sober people, that the far greater part of these are incapable of discerning the Lord's body, and have neither part nor lot in this matter. And, suppose, a minister should deny the communion to a common drunkard, or a profane swearer, he would find himself in a perilous case †.——2. It appears to be a shameful profanation of this ordinance, to make it a test of obedience in civil things, and the receiving of it an indispensable qualification for holding places under the government.——3. As it is an ordinance of a public nature, it seems quite wrong to administer it in private, to the sick, after the popish manner, as if it were a *viaticum*, i. e. a passport for Heaven.——4. As I embrace the doctrine of particular redemption, I cannot, in conscience, declare concerning every individual, that may be present at this ordinance, “the body of our Lord Jesus Christ—was given for thee,” &c.——“The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, was given for thee,” &c. since many may come here, who are wholly *destitute* of true faith, as well as licentious in their lives.

6. In

* Rub. end of the Com. Serv.

† Are there not some churches, at which many receive the communion, on Easter-day, who will be drunk on the same day, and, perhaps quarrelling too, before they arrive at home?——*Monstrum! horrendum!*

6. In the churching of women, as it is called, there is no sufficient ground, in the lives of many, to consider them as the servants of the Lord, in a solemn address to the Almighty; nor can I see how bearing a child can constitute to a woman a proper subject for the Lord's Supper, as the rubric directs;* since many who are serving divers lusts and pleasures, and remain strangers to God and the gospel of his Son, both bear children, and, *out of a piece of custom*, come to return thanks hereupon.

7. Once more: In the burial of the dead, I cannot see that Christian charity will admit *believing ministers and people*, with pure consciences, to call every man or woman, *our dear brother*, or *our dear sister*; since it is notorious that many who have lived the most abandoned lives, die without any appearances of repentance. Nor can I think myself justified in saying any longer, of every individual, "we commit *his* body to the ground, in *sure* and *certain* hope of the resurrection to eternal life. We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from a death of sin unto a life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him: as *our hope* is *this our brother doth*;" since I am fully assured that there will be a resurrection of the wicked to eternal damnation, as well as of the righteous to everlasting life: and, tho' I should suspend my judgment, as becometh us, upon the final state of the vilest sinner, that dies without any evidence of repentance; yet it is certainly very daring presumption to tell the Almighty, that we have *sure* and *certain* hope of his being gone to glory.

There are many other grievances in the church of England:

* Thank. of wom. &c. and Rub. in ult. Credat Judæus Apella. Non ego. — HORACE.

England: The whole service book being only a translation of the old Mass book, with the grosser errors expunged *. That there is a wretched deficiency in ecclesiastical discipline is generally acknowledged †; pluralities, non-residences, and all their attending evils, are so common as to be no longer thought shameful: These, with many other things I forbear to mention, I shall leave to the consideration of those concerned in them. The things I have noticed have long been the burden of my soul. The example of some persons whom I highly venerated for a considerable time, prevailed upon me to continue in my place; tho' in performing some parts of my duty, I have, with a trembling heart, adopted the converted Syrian's prayer: "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." ‡ But when the case of Nadab and Abihu, who "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not §," struck my mind, and that awful interrogation of the Almighty, "who hath required this at your hands?" || reached my heart, I was made to tremble in the divine presence, and immediately to resolve upon my resignation. No human precedents, however venerable, will be sufficient to justify us, in what the Lord hath

* "As for the service in the English Tongue, hath manifest reasons for it. And yet perchance seemeth to you a *new service*, and indeed is no other but the *old*. The *self same words* in English which were in Latin, *saving a few things taken out*, are found, that it had been a shame to have heard them in English, as *all they* can judge, which list to report" Edw. VI. to the Devon. Rib. in Fox's *Martyr*. Vol. II. p. 1189. col. 1. Edit. 1610,

† *Commun. serv. Address* in the beginning of it. ‡ 2 Kings v. 18.

§ Lev. x. 1, 2. || Isa. i. 12.

hath not commanded; for “ every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.”* This being my real case, I am constrained to resign. And it is both with pleasure and concern, that I now say: “ My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken, and I am escaped.” As a clergyman of the church of England, you will see my face no more, neither in this place, nor elsewhere. Having given you my reasons for this resignation, I shall now

SECONDLY, Take my *last farewell* of you. It affords me pleasure in this my departure from you, that I can say, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shamed to declare the whole counsel of God†, as far as I have been led into the knowledge of it. I have given you all warning from the mouth of the Lord; and therefore, remember, that if any of you perish everlastingly, your blood will be upon your own heads. For I have preached the gospel to every creature that came within the sound of my voice; and, without courting the smiles, or dreading the frowns of any man, declared in the language of my Divine Master, “ He that *believeth* and is *baptized*, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.”‡ It would have given me pleasure to have seen these solemn truths more regarded. However, they will be a swift witness against you another day. For, if you live and die in your sins, if you still neglect the great salvation of the gospel, you cannot escape the wrath and vengeance of the Almighty—“ The wicked;” all the wicked, not even the carnal, proud, self-righteous professors excepted,

* Rom. xiv. 12.

† Acts xx. 26, 27.

‡ Mar. xvi. 16.

cepted, " shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God."*

A few words to the much-dispised followers of a once crucified, but now exalted Jesus, shall now close the subject, and there with all my ministrations in the church of England.

Ye sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, who are princes in disguise, though, in the esteem of carnal men, you are the filth and offscouring of all! my soul is troubled for you, not knowing into whose hands you may *now* fall; whether into theirs, who will feed you with the sincere milk of the word, or into theirs, who will "*care for none of these things.*" Suffer, therefore, I beseech you, the word of exhortation, from one who can truly say with the apostle, that he is less than the least of all Saints, and the chief of sinners; but who, through free, rich, and sovereign grace, hath obtained mercy to be faithful.

1. Flee from sin, every sin, as from the face of a serpent; for however sweet it may appear in the enjoyment, nevertheless, afterwards, it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. O what has God wrought for you and in you according to the riches of his grace! What manner of persons, then, ought *you* to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

2. Be ever coming unto Jesus, " in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, " that you may receive, out of his fulness, grace for grace, abundance of grace, grace for every time of need, which is every moment. Let it be your constant study, under the influence of the divine Spirit, to live near unto him. Rest not in any duties whatsoever. " There is a way [of external duties] that seemeth
" right

* Psal. ix. 17.

right unto a man, but (O how awful!) the end thereof are the ways of death." Content not yourselves with ordinances, without enjoying the spiritual and gracious presence of the God of ordinances. True believers have real fellowship and sensible communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, at which golden seasons they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Be often viewing by the eye of faith, our dear Lord groveling in Gethsemane, and bleeding on Mount Calvary, and your souls shall prosper.

3. Whatever it cost you, never part with these sacred truths you have received, "knowing of whom you received them," and that they contain the salvation of your souls. Never yield up your faith, nor part with a good conscience, at any rate. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence, steadfast unto the end." If you should be called to it, rather than part with it, take "joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye have in Heaven a better and enduring substance." And never repine, tho' you be "poor in this world," whilst you are but "rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom,"—and of such a glorious Kingdom too!

4. Be much employed in prayer and reading the holy scriptures. Pray for yourselves, for one another, and for me also. Pray frequently and fervently; "for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Read the sacred scriptures with care and attention, accompanied with fervent prayer and ardent supplication. Inexhaustible treasures of divine wisdom are contained in them. "They are

more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold : sweeter also than honey, or the honey-comb." Here are the many "exceedingly great and precious promises, which in Christ "are all yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God," and the comfort and lasting salvation of his people.

5. Keep the commandments of your dear Redeemer. Inquire into the nature of his positive institutions, baptism and the Lord's supper. Follow the word of God in this matter—judge impartially—and act faithfully. Love one another with a pure heart fervently. True brotherly love is of a distinguishing, disinterested nature. None but the regenerated have the least spark of it. And, whoever is a subject of it, "is passed from death unto life." Abound in it more and more, that the *envious world* may be constrained to say, "See how these christians love one another!" Watch over one another with circumspection, sympathy, and tenderness. Forbear one another, and forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Let each esteem another better than himself. Seek the peace and prosperity of the Lord's gospel Zion : "for they shall prosper that love her." And consider the trials, temptations, tempers, and dispositions of one another, that ye may provoke one another unto love and good works.

6. And, lastly, Be looking for and hastening unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. He shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe. This will bear you up in every moment of adversity. And

it is your Lord's will that you should be comforted in all your tribulations with this glorious event.—— Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, saith the FIRST and the LAST. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," eternal life, in the kingdom of glory!

And thus, with this glorious prospect in view, and with the testimony of a good conscience, being sprinkled and purged by the blood of Jesus, I shall now bid you all—*farewell*. May the Lord have mercy upon you, lead you into all the truth as it is in Jesus, and give us a happy meeting before his *awful throne*. Henceforward I am resolved, through divine grace, to go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ (or *for Christ*) greater riches than all the treasures and temporalities of the church of England.——FARE YE WELL!

Now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. AMEN.

It is your Lord's will that you should be crowned
in all your tribulations with the glorious crown
of life, in the kingdom of glory.
I will give you a crown of life, and I will give you
a crown of glory, in the kingdom of glory.

And thus, with this glorious crown in view, and
with the testimony of a good conscience, being
sprinkled and purged by the blood of Jesus, I shall
now bid you all—farewell. May the Lord have mercy
upon you, lead you in, and all the things it is in
your mind and give us a happy meeting before his royal
throne. Henceforward I am resolved, through his
grace, to go forth into him without the camp, bearing
his reproach, choosing rather to suffer affliction with
the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin
for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ (or of
his) greater riches than the treasures of this
world. — Fare ye well.

Now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from
our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings
and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory
and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

ANANIAS'S *Reprehension and Exhortation to SAUL.*

A
S E R M O N.

DELIVERED

AT THE BAPTISM
OF THE REVEREND I. SLFE;

WHEREIN

THE NATURE AND ENDS

OF THAT

ORDINANCE ARE EXPLAINED,

THE MOST POPULAR OBJECTIONS

AGAINST

SUBMISSION TO IT REFUTED,

AND

THE DANGER AND FOLLY OF NEGLECTING IT EXPOSED.

By C. WHITFIELD.

"But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him." Luke vii. 30.

————— To them shall leave in charge,
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd,
And his salvation, *them who shall believe,*
Baptizing in the profuent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure. — — —

Milton's P. L. B. xii. 440, &c.

ST. JOHN'S

AT THE BATHS

OF THE TOWN OF BATH

THE NATURE AND

OF THE BATHS

THE MOST FAVORABLE



AND

THE BATHS

R. C. WHITFIELD

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A S E R M O N, &c.

A c t s xxii. 16.

*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized,
and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the
Lord.*

THIS part of sacred history, from whence my text is taken, contains the famous defence of the great apostle of the Gentiles, in the presence, and with the licence of Claudius Lysius, commander in chief of the Roman band, who had rescued him from the hands of a furious populace. In this noble speech, replete with true eloquence, divine wisdom, and fervent piety, he informs the assembly of his birth, education, and zealous attachment to the Jewish religion; and, of his cruel hatred, and virulent persecution, in the days of his ignorance, of the Christian religion and the professors of it, how the Glorious Redeemer appeared unto him *graciously*, and converted him *effectually* unto himself. In particular, he recites the blessed message with which Ananias was sent unto him, from the Lord, to comfort him in his great distress; which

which is concluded with this expostulatory reprehension, and pathetic exhortation: "and now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized," &c.

What an amazing change is here! what an illustrious display of omnipotent power, of everlasting love, and sovereign grace! Behold the young Pharisee, who thought himself blameless in the sight of God, yet filled with pride, involved in gross ignorance, and in a state of the vilest enmity and rebellion against the Lord and his Anointed! Behold him dragging the saints to prison, compelling them to blaspheme, and persecuting them, even unto death! Nay, what shall I say, this young man's breast boils with such anger, and his soul is filled with such indignation, that he even *breathes out* threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord! All the blood that had been shed in Jerusalem, was so far from satisfying his lust, that it only makes him thirst after blood more greedily. His heart is meditating fresh slaughter, and his feet run swiftly to shed blood: His throat is an open sepulchre. He spreads devastation where-ever he comes. Commissioned from the high priest, he resolves to visit Damascus. In his journey he is suffered to proceed until he comes *near* the city. But oh! amazing grace! this poor sinner is a *chosen vessel*! Electing love now displays her stores! Emmanuel claims the purchase of his blood! The shining majesty and powerful voice of Jesus surrounds him, awakens him, quickens and confounds him! He is humbled for his sins, obtains mercy, and is filled with the graces, comforts and gifts of the Holy Ghost! He is qualified for the service of the church, and called unto it; that he may feed her whom he so lately hated; watch over, plant and build,

what

what he so lately made havock of, and with such fury destroyed! From such a *singular pattern* or example of mercy and grace, let us be encouraged to pray, for the conversion of the vilest and most bloody persecutors of the church of God. And, since he obtained mercy, let the vilest sinner, the most abandoned profligate, and the proudest pharisee, being humbled for sin, be encouraged to hope in, to depend upon, and wait for the mercy of the Lord. At the same time, let no licentious professor, nor abandoned backslider presume, but remember, that what he did was in ignorance and unbelief.

But to return unto my text. It naturally divides itself itself into two parts. 1. An exhortatory reprehension, for the delaying of baptism: *Why tarriest thou?* which is aggravated by the present discovery of mercy: *and now why tarriest thou?* when thou hast been so highly favoured of thy much-injured Lord, who hath laid thee under such obligations to love and obedience, by the illustrious displays of super-abounding grace in thy favour? Delays are always dangerous in every line of life; most of all in religion, because of all other things it is of the greatest moment; and most inexcusable in those, whose peace and comfort is connected with obedience, and who are indebted unto the rich grace and sovereign mercy of God, for the whole of their salvation.

2. An exhortation is subjoined to this reprehension, which requires an immediate submission to the institutions of the Lord: *arise and be baptized.* Unto this he is encouraged from the blessings of purification and forgiveness, that in a certain sense are connected with this holy ordinance, and frequently enjoyed in it, and by it: *and wash away thy sins,*—

F

And,

And, since the enjoyment of the gracious presence of the Lord, in the blessings of his love, is to be sought for, by fervent prayer, in his institutions, it is further added; *calling upon the name of the Lord*. Which words not only express the duty of prayer in baptism, but also the proper Deity of the Lord Jesus, whom we are here directed to worship and adore.

In attempting a further improvement of this sacred passage, I propose to lay before you :

I. A brief account of the nature and ends of this institution.

II. The proper subjects of it; who without delay are exhorted to submit unto it.

III. The sense in which sin is wished away by it.

IV. The devotion required in it.

V. The most popular reasons, and their futility, for the delaying of it.

VI. The danger and folly of perishing in such a conduct.

I. The sacred institution referred to in my text, to which the apostle is exhorted to submit, is baptism. In order to obtain just notions concerning it, we must enquire more particularly,

First, Into the true nature of it. And, as it is an ordinance of divine revelation, we must confine our enquiries purely to that sacred volume. For, from whence can we obtain just ideas of an institution, but from the records which enjoin it, and explain the nature of it? From hence

1. We learn that it is a *positive* institution. I do not mean to trouble you with the various distinctions that have been made between things, or duties, which are distinguished into *natural*, *moral*, and *positive*. By a positive institution, I mean, one that is confined

confined to certain subjects. Not to any particular nation, or race of men : but unto such persons of every kindred, tongue, and people, as fall under the character of those whom John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, baptized. They preached the word unto all ; they exhorted all men to repent and believe the gospel ;—to worship, adore, and call upon the true God, and to attend unto every branch of moral worship : but never admitted any persons unto this ordinance, until they received the word ; at least professed so to do. They were careful to inform the persons, who desired to be admitted unto this ordinance, that, *‘if they believed with all their hearts, they might.’*—Acts viii.

2. This institution is of divine original. The first administrator of this ordinance, informs us, that he was *sent or commissioned from God to baptize* *. I scarce need to remind you, into what a dilemma “the chief priests and elders of the people” were involved, when they were interrogated by our Divine Saviour, concerning the original of John’s baptism.—“If we shall say from Heaven,” say they in their reasoning amongst themselves, “He will say unto us, Why did they not then believe him ?” But if we shall say of men, we fear the people : for all hold John as a prophet.”—These people, you see, wanted to be consistent with their former principles and conduct.—They could not deny in their hearts the divine original of John’s baptism : but then they well foresaw what a weighty objection to their unbelief would arise if they publicly admitted the truth. On the other hand, their consciences would have allowed them to have assigned its origin to human invention ; but the

* John i. 33.

the fear of popular clamour constrained them. — They, therefore, impiously answer, "We cannot tell *." This answer, it must be owned, was entirely consistent with their preceding conduct. But it is an awful thing to be consistent in a course of sin, of pride, unbelief, hypocrisy, and falshood, as these people were. But if the baptism of John was from Heaven, from whence was the baptism of Jesus? — From Heaven also, without all doubt. The' Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, who received"† their authority from their Divine Master. And, when they renewed their commission, after resurrection from the dead, he particularly, but solemnly commanded them to teach and to baptize the disciples, so made: ordaining this, as a divine institution, to be continued in the church, unto the end of the world ‡. Wherefore let us ever eye the divine original of this institution, that our faith may be conversant with God in it; and then those glorious ends, worthy of its author, will be answered by it. At the same time remember, that it will be found in the end dangerous to trifle with it, despise and neglect it.

3. This institution is purely a gospel one, confined unto the last dispensation; and therefore, durable and abiding. The Jews had many ceremonial purifications, which were performed *by dipping of the whole body in water*; therefore the apostle calls them *divine baptisms*:§ But they bear no relation to the institution

* Matt. xxi. 23 — 27. † John iv. 2. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 19.

§ That John the Baptist and our Saviour did not take up this ordinance from some *human custom* observed by the Jews, in admitting proselytes into their community, is well known to the learned: for whatever might be afterwards, they had no such practice at that time. Those who want information in this

tion in my text, except in the mode of *dipping*. This had no existence until God ordained it in the ministry of John the Baptist. And, as the King of Zion in renewing the commission of his apostles, joins this with the ministry of the word, to follow upon its being received, it evidently shows that it is one of those things which remain *. To say the baptism of the Holy Ghost put an end to this ordinance, or rendered it useless, is, to say the least of it, *weak and foolish*. So far from this, that Peter argues the propriety of baptizing, or admitting to baptism the house of Cornelius, because they had received the Holy Ghost †. The same divine authority which *ordains* an institution, is required to *disannul* it. And, until it can be shown, that God hath set it aside, it remains in full force, and will be regarded by "them that fear God," yea, by all them that truly "fear before him:" ‡.

4. The *only* proper mode of administering the ordinance is, by *immersion in water*. I well know that this is a tender subject, and that the far greater part of that body of people, called Christians, both think and practise otherwise. Nay, is it not lamentable, that in an age of refinement like ours, "he that departeth, from superstition and human invention herein, maketh him self a prey," || not only to the licentious wit and profane scoffs of the multitude, but even to the malevolent temper and speeches of those who profess a great regard for the word and institutions of the

this point, may consult Dr GALE's *Reflections on Mr WALL's Hist.* p. 329, &c. OWEN *Theologum* l. 1. c. 9. p. 109. Dr JENNINGS's *Jewish Antiquities*, Vol. 1. c. 3. p. 138. And, above all, Dr GILL's *Dissert. on Jewish Baptisms* at the end of his *Body of Divinity*, Vol. III.

* Heb. xii. 27. † Acts x. 47. ‡ Eccl. viii. || Is. lix. 15.

the Lord? But, to wave this for the present. There are but two or three ways, whereby this controversy can be decided, and they are all in our favour. 1. The radical meaning of the word *baptize*, must afford singular light in this matter. It is, as all know, a Greek word, which our venerable translators, for reasons best known to themselves, left untranslated. The simple verb βαπτίζω, is, in the few places, in which it is used in the New Testament, applied unto immersion, and only capable of being understood of it: "Send Lazarus that *he may dip* the tip of his finger in water."* He it is, to whom I shall give a sop when *I have dipped* it.† "And he was clothed in a vesture *dip*t in blood."‡ And the various places in which its derivative (βαπτίζω) is used, require to be so rendered, except when it is used for washing, in a secondary sense, which is very rarely; and then, the middle voice of this verb is so applied, because in washing the hands, clothes, &c. there always is *an immersion* of them, in order to this end. The lexicographers and the best expositors render it *immersion* or *dipping*; writers use the word in this sense also. 2. The administrations of this ordinance, which are particularly recorded, manifestly shew this to be the proper mode. "And they were *baptized* of him (*dipped by him*) in Jordan, confessing their sins." "And Jesus when he was *baptized* (*dipped*) went up straightway out of the water."|| "And they went both down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water," &c. § Nothing but the pride of the flesh, and the carnal prejudices of education, can resist and oppose such evidences

* Luke xvi. 24.

† John xiii. 26.

‡ Rev. xix. 13.

Matth. iii.

§ Acts viii.

dences as these. 3. The things alluded unto, and figured forth by this ordinance, will agree with no other mode of administration. These are a burial and resurrection. "Therefore we *are buried* with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."* And again: *Buried with him in baptism* wherein also ye *are risen* with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead."† The expositors all allow, that these passages allude unto the ancient manner of baptizing, which was by *immersion of the whole body in water*. And, allow me to ask, why ought it not still to be the mode? Certainly it *once was* the mind of the Lord, that it should be so administered? and when, or by whom, did he signify he had changed his mind about it? Without this, none has a right to recede from the original mode. The folly of changing the *form* and *mode*, &c. of divine institutions, can scarcely be pointed forth in terms too strong, or language too bold. . Howsoever such persons may now *face it out*, their countenances will certainly fall, when the Redeemer shall say to them, "Who hath required these things at your hand?"

5. This ordinance being an abiding one, is binding on all Christ's disciples unto the end of the world. In that very commission where he requires his apostles to baptize those that are taught, we must consider a subjection unto it, required in those persons. No sooner did Peter's audience enquire about salvation, than

* Rom. vi.

† Col. ii.

than he exhorts them "to repent and be baptized." In one word, all who believe in the Son of God for salvation, are indispensibly obliged to submit unto this ordinance. It is not a thing they may do, or not do, without incurring the Redeemer's displeasure. They cannot neglect it, but at the expence of their own peace and comfort, and at the risk of displeasing God.

SECONDLY, From this short view of the nature of this ordinance, the ends of it are easily gathered.—They are supreme and subordinate.

1. The supreme end of this ordinance, is, the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *. It is a branch of the *Divine Counsel* †, which displays the holiness and super-abounding grace of the Father, in the redemption and salvation of his chosen, by the death and resurrection of his Son. Nor is the grace, wisdom, power, and majesty of his Son less conspicuous herein. They shine forth in his regal power, who instituted it; they are displayed in those last steps of his deep abasement, and first instance of his high exaltation, which are shadowed forth hereby; and they are sweetly enjoyed, and delightfully beheld by all the faithful herein. The same may be said of the Eternal Spirit. His glory appears in his fitting us for, disposing us unto, blessing us in, and enabling us to pursue the ends of, this institution. The glory, power, greatness, grace, wisdom, mercy and majesty, of the Divine Three, shine with resplendent rays, and inexpressible refulgence herein; and the subjects of it are devoted, professedly devoted, unto God, laid under the greatest obligations to love, adore, delight in, and serve him; and to promote his honour and glory in their day and generation.

2. The

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

† Luke vii. 30.

The subordinate ends of this ordinance, are—
 1. Comfort, establishment, and edification. All these may, and often are, the portion of the administrator, and other spectators. But we speak of them now, as the special privilege of the immediate *believing subject* of this ordinance. His soul is here favoured with a heart-reviving view of the love, mercy, and grace, of God in his Son; of the dreadful sufferings of his adorable Saviour, over whom, when he stood as our representative, all the billows and tempestuous waves of divine vengeance flowed. He is here led to see how Christ was baptized in his bloody passion, to obtain the salvation of his people. He beholds him not only brought into the dust of death, but raised from it, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, while he thus has “fellowship with his dear Redeemer in his sufferings, the benign influence of his blessed Spirit, gives him a sweet discovery of pardon and justification, of peace and salvation herein; and not only makes him to know the power of his resurrection, and experience conformity unto his death, but often affords, or seals such a knowledge of interest in him, and all divine blessings through him, as makes him “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Pardon of sin, an increase of all grace, are blessings closely connected with this holy ordinance. What a soul-comforting, what a faith-establishing, what an edifying ordinance, then, must this be!——2. Another end hereof, is that the subject may honour the Redeemer in a confession of his name, own his kingly power, behold the obligations he is under to obedience, claim a regular entrance into his church, enjoy the privileges connected with it in an honourable way, and solemnly devote himself un-

to his service. This is the initiating ordinance into the service of Jesus Christ. He redeemed us by his blood, that "we might be holy, and serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all our days."* Herein a believer puts on Christ as his Lord and Master, professes a separation from the world, and solemnly in that awful name, in which he is baptized, devotes himself to the service, worship, and fear of the true God. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ*. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also *should walk in newness of life*."† No person whatever hath any right to claim the privileges of church-membership, until he be baptized. And remember, that, without newness of life, the end of our baptism is frustrated. The church of God hath in all ages been troubled and disturbed, polluted and dishonoured by a race of professors, who have been "enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."‡ However, remember, that the Redeemer "hath his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor,"§, in a little time, when such persons will be cloathed with shame, and banished from his presence with everlasting confusion. I come,

II. To enquire into the character of the proper subjects of it. Carnal prejudices respecting the kingdom or church of Christ, as to its external form and subjects, have greatly obscured the light of truth in the

* Luke i. 74. 75.

† Rom. vi. 4.

‡ Phil. iii. 18, 19.

§ Matth. iii. 12.

the minds of Protestants, respecting the subjects of baptism. The sacred scriptures are, however, very plain upon this head. The persons whom John the Baptist baptized were *only* such as *confessed their sins*, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance.* Those who were baptized by the disciples of Jesus, were first *made disciples* by him, and *then* baptized †. The persons, who, on the day of Pentecost, and subsequent thereto were baptized, were such as “were pricked in their heart,” and “received the word gladly.” ‡ The Samaritans, “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, were baptized, both men and women.” § Observe here are no *children* mentioned.—The Eunuch was admitted into this ordinance upon the profession of his faith. || Saul was baptized, *after* he believed in the Lord.** “Cornelius, who feared God with all his house,” called them “all before God to hear all things” which Peter was “commanded of God” to speak. And when the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” *then* the Apostle “commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” †† Lydia and her household, whom Saul and Barnabas baptized, were such persons as had their hearts opened by the Lord to receive his word, and to receive comfort, under all their afflictions, from the ministry and conversation of the apostles ††. The jailor and his household, baptized by the same persons, were such as *heard the word* “and rejoiced, believing in God§§” At Corinth many of the Corinthians *bearing*” the word of God, preached by the apostles, “*believed and were baptized.*”

* Matth. 8. † John iv. 1. ‡ Acts ii. 27, 41. § Acts viii.
|| Acts viii. ** Acts ix. †† Acts x. †† Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40.
§§ Acts 31. 34.

ed*.” These are the principal baptisms we read of, in the sacred history ; and it evidently appears from hence, as also from the commission, that the only proper subjects of baptism, are, persons confessing their sins, and professing “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” I honestly declare, I have carefully consulted the New Testament upon this head, and I am fully convinced that there is neither command, example of, nor certain consequence for, baptizing any other. Unprejudiced persons, conversant in the scriptures, and ancient ecclesiastical history, will readily allow, that “*Primis duobus seculis nemo baptismum accipiebat, nisi qui, in fide instructus, et doctrina Christi imbutus, testari possit, se credere : propter illa verba, Qui cederit et baptizatus fuerit. Ergo prius erat credere ; inde ordo catechumenorum in ecclesia : † i. e. “In the two first ages (i. e. centuries) no one received baptism, but he, who, having been instructed in the faith, and imbued with the doctrines of Christ, was able to testify, that he believed, because of these words, He that believeth and is baptized. Therefore it was first required to believe ; hence the order of Chatechumens in the church.” This is a subject that hath employed the pens of many able persons. And I am persuaded, that little new can be advanced upon it. It is no small consolation, however, amidst all the heat of controversy, that our adversaries are constrained to acknowledge, that the persons we baptize are proper subjects of this ordinance, and that our mode of administration is scriptural. We know there is but “one baptism, ‡” as there is but “one Lord and one faith. §” And therefore if they can find peace in*

* Acts xviii. 8.

† SUICERUS *Thesaur. Ec. sub voce Συμεων.*

‡ Eph. iv. 5.

§ II. xxiv. 5.

in *another mode*, and *other subjects* of baptism, we leave them in the *peaceable possession* of their practice. The circumlocutory arguments from circumcision and the Abrahamic covenant, we are persuaded, are utterly insufficient to support it. For their own welfare, we wish them duly to consider this matter,—lest it be found out another day, “that they have transgressed the laws, and changed the ordinances” of the Lord’s house.

In the mean time we conclude from the preceding instances of baptism, and from Christ’s commission, wherein they who are taught, or made disciples by teaching, are commanded to be baptized; that the *only proper subjects* of this ordinance are such persons as profess “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” These ought to submit, without delay, to the same. And the Lord requires it of such.—The words of our text are express: “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” This brings me,

III. To shew, in what sense sin is washed away by baptism, or *in it*. For the words do not suppose that sin is washed away by any virtue in the ordinance; but only that purification from sin is enjoyed from God *in and through it*. But more of this afterwards. It is to be observed,

FIRST, That sin is a pollution or defilement. This, the very idea of washing it away supposes and implies. The lusts of the flesh in their various diversifications, idolatry, and profanation of the sabbaths and ordinances of God, are more especially represented under the idea of pollution and defilement, in the sacred scriptures. Tho’ it is applied unto, all sin whatever. It is all a defilement, and of a defiling nature. There

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is no touching the accursed unhallowed thing, but it will stain and pollute us. Concerning sin, under this idea, we may observe :

1. That it is a pollution of a moral nature. All natural defilements are the dire effects of moral pollution. Sin is the very reverse of righteousness and morality. And sinful pollution is the moral depravity of the heart, the understanding, will, affections, and all the powers of the mind. It is this which makes sin, all sin, an abomination in the sight of God. He is "of purer eyes than ~~we~~ behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity," but with great abhorrence and detestation*.

2. Sin is a general, epidemical pollution. Neither age, nor sex, are exempted from it. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God†." Some are more polluted with the gross defilements of sin than others, yet all are polluted with it; are estranged from God by it; and pollute all they engage in with it. The dire ferment hath leavened our whole nature. The animal desires are deeply tinged with it. Not only are their streams polluted, but in some their very current is *changed*, and they, thocking to mention, because so sinful, run even *against nature*‡! —In others they are swelled to such a height as to break down all the fences, which nature, reason, and all human and divine laws have erected, to direct and keep them in proper bounds. Every power and passion of the soul is defiled by sin. The understanding is become the seat of darkness, error, and deception. The will is in a state of open rebellion against the laws, government, and grace of the Most High. The affections

* Hab. i. 13.

† Rom. iii. 21.

‡ Rom. i. 26, 27.

affections are a fountain of impurity, enmity, and irregular desires. The conscience is even polluted and defiled, and often becomes so seared as to be past all feeling. What an epidemical defilement then must sin be!

3. This dreadful disorder is truly loathsome and disagreeable. Those who labour under its power, and are subject unto its prevalence are in love with it. They take pleasure in "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the carnal mind, sporting themselves with their own deceivings*." Nay, some there are, who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only to do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them†." But, in the sight of God, it is loathsome and abominable. He invariably hates it, and will never be reconciled unto the vile turpitude of it, in all its vast extent, he is perfectly acquainted with, and therefore, he loaths and detests it, and will by no means let it go unpunished. And of every true penitent it may be truly said, that iniquity is loathed by him. "My wounds stink and are corrupt," says David, "because of my foolishness‡" If sin be not loathsome and disagreeable, we have just reason to conclude that we have not the spirit of Christ. Nay, whatever we may esteem in religion, will be of no account, if we have any fellowship with the throne of iniquity, which frameth mischief by a law.

4. This is a disease equally shameful and dishonourable. Of all our native original rectitude and true honour, sin has bereaved us. Nor can there ever be true honour enjoyed in connection with it. How many have had an honourable character deeply stained

* Eph. ii. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 13. † Rom. i. ult. ‡ Ps. xxxviii. 5.

ed by it? Neither prince nor peasant, priest nor people can have honour by it. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to *any people*."*—And tho' there are some sinners hardy enough to glory in their shame, yet all who have believed thro' grace are greatly ashamed of it. "What fruit then had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed †." God established his covenant with, and grants all the blessings of it unto his chosen for this end: "That thou mayest remember and be confounded" says he to Jerusalem, "and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, after all that thou hast done, saith the LORD GOD ‡." And as for those enemies of the Lord, who live without fear, and die without shame or remorse for sin, he "will clothe them with shame," and everlasting confusion ||. Sin is the source of shame, and where *that* is not, you need fear no shame.

5, It is a pollution of a dangerous and deadly nature. It is dangerous to a man's best interests. It exposes him to the wrath of God Almighty. And therefore, of every sinner, who willingly persists in, and labours under this dreadful defilement, it may be truly said, "Destruction and misery are in his ways. §" For, lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.** In vain have some distinguished between *venial* and *mortal* sin. For all sin is of a deadly nature. The wages of sin is death †† Neither is there any forgiveness of it, but through the blood of Christ. And therefore,

6. It

* Prov. xiv. 34. † Rom. vi. 21. ‡ Ezek. xvi. ult. || Ps. cxxxii. ult.
§ Rom. iii. ** James i. 15. †† Rom. vi. ult.

6. It is a pollution, which none but God can cleanse from, and a defilement which nothing but the blood of Christ can purge away. Every other expedient applied unto it hath failed. "For tho' thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God," Jer. ii. 22. But many are they who have enjoyed healing and salvation from it, in the atonement and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we may be saved" from the deadly stains of this direful pollution, Acts iv. 12. The faithful in all ages have experienced, and have been enabled to say, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood *." But,

Secondly, The apostle is commanded to "arise and be baptized and wash away his sins." And as it is the blood of Christ, which alone has procured pardon, and cleanseth the guilty conscience, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, which applies this to the believer, leadeth him to it, and cleanseth him by it; so baptism cannot be said to cleanse us from sin, either *meritoriously* or *influentially*. Therefore, some other sense, or senses, must be sought for; and which I apprehend are the following:

1. In baptism there is a figurative washing away of sin. The apostle Peter says that *baptism saveth us*, as it is the (*antitype*) *antitype* or *corresponding figure* of the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, by

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the

* 1 John 1. 7. Rev. 1. 5.

the waters of the flood. The ark, and not the waters, being a type of Christ, was the principal mean in the salvation of Noah and his family. And so, in like manner, not the waters of baptism, but Christ, the ark of the covenant, the author of baptism, is the salvation of believers *. His death, burial, and resurrection, are figured forth in a very lively manner in this ordinance. The waters represent the free grace and love of God, from whence salvation springs, frequently compared to water in the sacred scriptures; as also, the tempestuous waves and flowing billows of divine wrath and displeasure, into which our glorious Redeemer was plunged, when he obtained eternal redemption for us †.

In going down into the water, being overwhelmed in it, and coming up out of it, we have a figurative view of Christ's voluntary sufferings and deep abasement; of his burying our sins in oblivion, and sweetening the grave for us; of his rising from the dead, and triumphing over all the powers of darkness; and of our communion and fellowship with him herein, and conformity unto him, in consequence thereof. In respect of all which we behold in baptism a figure of our cleansing from sin in different ways.

2. Baptism washeth away the defilements of sin professionally. Every subject of this ordinance professeth faith in Christ, as his Saviour and Redeemer, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and by whose obedience the church is redeemed. He professeth to forsake sin, to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to pursue perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Hence we are said to be "buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ

* 1 Pet. iii. 21. † Psal. lxxix. 15. — xliii. 7. ‡ Rom. vi. 1. &c.

Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we would walk in newness of life.³ Hence many of the ancients were wont to speak of being cleansed from sins in this ordinance: "We go down into the water," says St. Barnabas*, who lived in the first century. "full of sins and defilements, and come up out of it, bringing forth fruit in our hearts, and having fear and hope in Jesus in our spirits." And in the vision of Stetlermas, those persons who heard the word of God, and were willing to be baptized, until they were informed that baptism requireth a person to part with and forsake all his sins, are thus spoken of: "But what are the rest which fell nigh to the waters, and could not be rolled into the waters? They are such as have heard the word, and were willing to be baptized in the name of the Lord, but when it comes into their minds what sanctity the profession of truth requireth, they withdrew themselves, and walk again according to their own wicked desires†.

3. Above all, baptizing may be said to wash away sin, instrumentally, or sacramentally, as some persons speak, it being a mean of directing our souls to look by faith unto the person, blood, and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, for peace, pardon, and purity; and an ordinance, in which the influences of the Holy Ghost, with an increase of his gifts, graces, and consolations,

* *Ἡμεῖς μὲν καθαθαίνομεν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τοὺς ἁμαρτίας, ὅπου καὶ καθαθαίνομεν καρποφορούς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἡμῶν τὸν φόβον, τὴν ἐλπίδα, ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἵσταται ἐν τῷ πνεύματι.* BARNAB. *Epist. Cap. II.* Edit. 1724. Amstel.

† "Ceteri vero qui cadebant juxta aquas, et non poterant volvi in aquas, qui sunt? ii sunt, qui verbum audierunt, volentes baptizari in nomine Domini, quibus cum venisset in memoriam sanctitatis veritatis, retrahunt se, ambulantque rursus post desideria sua scelerata." — SANCT. HERM. *Lib. i. Sec. 7.* Edit. Amstel. 1724.

solations, are enjoyed : hence the apostle Peter commanded his newly awakened hearers, who were crying out for salvation, to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins ; and ye shall receive," says he, "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Many *poor spirited* disciples have been sweetly comforted in this ordinance, and have had gracious discoveries of pardoning mercy, increase of grace and consolation, with the blessed sealings of the Holy Ghost. whereby their doubts have been removed, and their interest in all divine things, graciously evidenced. And therefore, such as are seeking these blessings, ought not to be discouraged, but confess their sins, profess their *little faith*, and wait upon God herein. Nor can I doubt but Ananias had a special respect to this washing away of sin in my text. The apostle was but newly converted. His eyes were opened, and some rays of comfort spread through his mind. But he wanted spiritual strength, and clearer discoveries of purification from sin. And what mean could be more proper to direct him thereto than this ; wherein the Redeemer and his grace are so fully represented ? "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," &c. d. "The Lord hath graciously met with thee, appeared for thee, and designs thee for thy service ; and tho' thou labour under much weakness and many fearful apprehensions, yet as he hath opened thine eyes, and sent me to inform thee of his gracious designs, follow him, without delay, in all his appointed institutions ; especially be baptized in his name, for the remission of sins, expecting his presence and the application of pardoning mercy, while thou viewest him by faith in the sufferings of his death, and the triumphs of his resurrection." This brings me to observe,

IV. That

IV. That devotion is required in this ordinance, and really must take place, if we enjoy any purification from sin by it. The apostle is required to call upon the name of the Lord.*

FIRST, The object of this devotion is THE LORD. This phrase, (*το ονομα του Κυριου*) *the name of the Lord*, is evidently expressive of the person of our Lord Jesus, in which sense the term (*το ονομα*) *the name** is often used, particularly in Matth. vi. 9. where it is applied to the Almighty. His divinity, in the strongest terms, is hereby expressed; for certainly he must be the true God, as our Redeemer is elsewhere called †, whom Ananias directed this young convert to worship and adore? At the same time it is evident, that all that which is called DIVINE, is included in this glorious object: for whoever worshippeth the Lord Jesus aright, draws near the triune God through his mediation, worshipeth and adoreth his sacred Majesty in this Blessed Mediator. "I AM in THE FATHER and THE FATHER in ME," "I and THE FATHER are ONE!"

SECONDLY, The subject of this devotion is the subject of the ordinance. The ministrator of it, and those who are spectators thereof, are to unite in pious addresses unto God; but the immediate subject

is *Shem*. So in the Old Testament. *Shem* JEHOVAH, i. e. THE NAME OF JEHOVAH, II. xxx. 27. and other places; and sometimes only *Shem*, Lev xxiv. 11. 16. is a title of our blessed Redeemer. Hence, with submission, when it is said, *as huchal likoro be Shem Jehovah*, Gen. iv. ult. "Then men began to call in the of Jehovah," does it not imply, that Seth, Enos, and their posterity, publicly invoked the divine Redeemer, the promised seed, and, in him, all that is worshipped and called God? See Exod xxiii. 21.

† 1 John v. 20.

† John xiv. 2.—x. 30.

is here required, in a special manner, to call upon the name of the Lord. Howsoever exact, as to the external form of an institution we may be, yet without true devotion in it, neither the glory of God, nor our own comfort and consolation can be promoted by it. If we expect our souls to enjoy purification from sin, in baptism, we must, after the glorious example of the Lord Jesus, * and in obedience to my text, be engaged, fervently engaged, in the spiritual devotion.

THIRDLY, The subject matter of this devotion, or the devotion itself is prayer, "calling upon the name of the Lord." Prayer is not only an ordinance itself, but an attendant upon all others, and is that which in a special manner denotes them to be religious and divine. This duty being required, includes not the whole of inward devotion; faith, hope, love, and all those holy affections which ought ever to accompany this, and all divine ordinances. And it supposes the proper subjects of baptism to be believers in Christ. For, "How shall they call on him *in whom* they have not believed†"? As without faith, no acceptable prayer can be made to God, so the person who lives without prayer, hath no reason to conclude himself possessed of true faith. But Saul was now possessed of the spirit of prayer. The Lord said to Ananias when he sent him unto Saul, "Behold he prayeth:‡" which expresseth the merciful regard, which the Lord had to his cries, and the spirituality, and fervency of his prayers, in contradistinction to his former Pharisaical legal services, which were no prayers in God's account; as also, the efficacious power of sovereign grace, in enabling, teaching, and constraining such a person to pray. Grace is not
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* Luke iii. 21.

† Rom. x. 14.

‡ Acts ix. 11.

more illustriously displayed, in bringing an abandoned profligate to pray, than in bringing a *formal devotionalist* to the throne of grace. Upon the whole, it evidently appears, that devotion in the subject of this ordinance, is required by the Lord, which is another, tho' collateral proof, that not infants, but professing believers, are the only proper subjects of it. I come now,

V. To shew the weakness and insufficiency of the most popular objections that are made, against submission to this institution. Under this head, however, I must recede from the method preceding; and instead of taking our account from the Bible, attend unto the most common arguments, under which I have heard pious persons sheltering themselves from conviction of their duty.

FIRST, I have known some, who have acknowledged baptism to be a divine ordinance, binding on all Christ's disciples to the end of the world, and yet have lived in the neglect of it, though they professed to believe in Jesus Christ; and gave this, as a reason of their conduct, that they did not see it to be *their duty in particular*. The foundation of this objection, if I am not far deceived, arises from a very dreadful mistake in the very fundamental of true godliness, namely, that we ought, by the sudden suggestion, or powerful application of some passage of scripture, to be *particularly persuaded*, that it is our *particular duty* to be baptized, &c. Whatever others may do, I freely own that it is with uneasiness I expose the enthusiasm and delusion of the human mind; of which I take this to be a real instance. That the divine spirit doth open the scriptures to believers, bring them to their remembrance, shew to them the things of Christ thereby, and

and produce salutary effects in their souls thro' these means, is an undoubted soul refreshing truth: but to say, that when we are brought to place all our hope and dependence upon the Redeemer for salvation, we ought still to wait for such impulses as the above, to point forth our duty in this ordinance, is certainly to speak deceitfully in the matters of the Lord. Can you expect your duty more clearly stated than in the sacred page? What other authority would you have than these words of the Lord, "Repent and be baptized; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved."? What other, what better encouragement would you have than this, "If thou believeth with all thy heart, thou mayest?" If you are of those who *tramble at the word of God* you will duly regard the sacred text and obey it, without expecting to be *thunderstruck from heaven* upon the occasion. As the devil is capable of bringing passages of scripture to the mind, as well as the Holy Spirit, ought we not to fear, lest we slight the authority of King Jesus in the sacred records, and follow the delusions of that lying spirit, who ever lieth in wait to deceive? and instead of obeying the Prince of Life, be honouring *his greatest foe*? As you tender your soul's welfare and the honour of our Lord Jesus, let me beseech you to beware of such delusions as these. Trifle no longer with matters of this moment. But, without further delay, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord."

SECONDLY, Others there are who neglect this holy ordinance, and church communion, on account of their doubts and fears concerning their state and condition before God. These are the doubtful, who are afraid lest they presume. They are ready to think
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it would be daring boldness in them, under all their unworthiness, so attended with doubts and oppressed with fears, to confess Christ, and follow him in this and other sacred institutions. Had they but such comforts, and so many promises as they have heard of some persons enjoying, they could take encouragement. But alas ! as for them, it is quite otherways. They are weak and feeble ; have had no promises, at least abiding ones, and conclude that their profession would only terminate in the dishonour of the Redeemer's cause. But how weak and futile are such objections as these ? How are we to expect a removal of our doubts and fears but by an augmentation of our spiritual light and strength in the ways of obedience, according to his promise ? " They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength * " In this way did the apostle Paul enjoy strength and comfort. In this way did Peter direct his newly-awakened, sin-convinced, soul-converted, hearers, to look for it †. Though I should suspect that faith which is never combated with doubts and fears, yet remember they are directly opposite unto true faith, and, if encouraged, destructive of all true peace. Therefore, oppose them continually, and give no place to them. " Fear not, only believe ‡. " With regard unto your comfort from the promises of God, give me leave to warn you against a common, but dangerous mistake. Think not, that your right to the promises, and comfort from them, depend in anywise on *the manner* on which they are brought unto your minds. Your right to them depends upon the free grace of God—your liberty to apply them, on his free declaration, and your firm belief of them—and your comfort from

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them

* Isa. xl. ult. † Acts ix. and ii. ‡ Lu. viii. 50.

them lieth in the glorious grace contained in them, in conjunction with the veracity, faithfulness, and power of God to fulfil them. If you understand this subject aright, and firmly believe the sacred promises of the Lord, whatever doubts and fears you labour under, or are attended with, you never will have occasion to say, "I have no promise——once I had a promise, but now it is taken away——*doth his promise fail for evermore**?" As to your fears, lest a profession of the Redeemer should terminate in the dishonour of his name, howsoever plausible they may appear, they are no better founded than the other.—True it is, that many have dishonoured Christ by their apostacy, error, and licentiousness, who have made a profession of him. But instances like these are not to discourage, but to caution you. You know who hath promised, "As the day is, so shall thy strength be †". Is he not able to keep and preserve you under a religious profession, and at last present you faultless before the throne? And without he keep you, tho' you should not profess his name, into what shame and dishonour would you be daily plunged?—Let me beseech you no more to take shelter beneath such a covering as this, lest you repent it in the end. The only way to be delivered from your fears, to obtain evidence of interest in Christ, and to be preserved from dishonouring his name, is to cast your care, and roll all your burdens upon the Lord—to receive his word, and to follow him in this and all other Divine ordinances. "Repent and be baptised for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

THIRDLY, Another objection I have met with, is, that baptism,

* Ps. lxxvii. 8.

† Deut. xxxiii. 25.

baptism, not being essential to salvation, may be dispensed with on that account. This objection is big with absurdity. We are far from asserting that it is any way meritorious, or procurative of the blessings of salvation. Yet, at the same time, we have shewn how the enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, stand closely connected with a proper submission to it. It is *essential* to a holy profession of Christ, and a regular admission into Zion. And, I must own, that to me it appears, charging God with folly, to say, that any thing he has revealed, or any ordinance he has instituted, is *not essential*. Tho' not essential to the salvation of sinners, which is obtained by the blood of his Son; yet *every truth* he hath thought proper to reveal, and *every ordinance* his wisdom hath ordained, are *all essential* to some great and glorious end, worthy of their Divine Author. Besides, the very same objection lieth with equal strength against every other divine ordinance, and against every branch of moral conversation. It discovereth no small degree of ingratitude against the Redeemer, when we can neglect his institutions, because we are saved by grace. And it manifesteth a legal, unfilial spirit, to intimate that any ordinance is procurative of salvation. And I will venture to assert, that those slothful servants, who never perform the duties of religion but with an eye to their being saved by them, will find themselves, notwithstanding their mercenary, sinister doings, exposed to everlasting condemnation for their folly *. Let us hear no more of such an absurd objection as this. But, on the contrary, be stimulated to observe this divine ordinance, as well as all others, not because we are saved by it, but by the sovereign mercy and

* Matth. vii. 22, 23. — xiii. 5. 14.

and grace of God in his dear Son, have a promise of enjoying the blessings of salvation in it, and are informed of its being *essential* to our comfort, reputable and orderly admission into Zion, and to the glory of God. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be damned."

FOURTHLY, Another very formidable objection in some people's esteem, is, that by being baptized, they must break their religious connections, and so prevent their greater service and utility in the kingdom of Christ. To this I answer, that it appears at first view, that there is a great defect in such connections as cannot be reconciled to the obedience of faith. And tho' no one more regardeth the *external order* of the kingdom of Christ than myself, yet I am certain that a practical submission to a divine institution, can never be subversive of it, tho' it may break our rank in the *worldly sanctuary*, it is the only way to render us *orderly* in the Redeemer's *spiritual kingdom*. Tho' it may *divest us of that popularity*, which a *popular connection* hath invested us with, yet it will be the way to *clothe us with that applause* which is truly honourable in the sight of God. And, as to a supposition of its preventing our *greater usefulness*, it bespeaketh a considerable degree of pride, vanity, and self sufficiency. No doubt, but the God of wisdom will make his chosen saints and servants useful, more or less, in every connection: but to think, or say, that in these connections in which they cannot keep his commandments, but must often offend against their consciences, they are like to be more useful, is to establish that dangerous, antinomian, damnable position, so greatly detested by the apostle, that we may do evil and neglect to do good, that good may come*. —

Does

Does not all our *real usefulness*, in every connection, depend upon the blessing of God? Are we of *such consideration*, that his work cannot be done without us? Are we likely to do more for him, where *we choose to stand*, or to *bow*, than in the *good old way*, in which he biddeth us go *? Are we more likely to have his blessing in walking after the traditions of men, than in the sacred institutions of his word? Surely we must be highly elevated in our own esteem, if after the consideration of these things, we can be prevailed upon to offend our consciences and neglect the institutions of the Lord, in order to preserve popular connections, and be more useful in the kingdom of Christ. Obedience to his revealed will is infinitely preferable in the divine esteem, to all the sacrifices of interest, human tradition, and popular applause that you can offer him; and to hearken with a filial ear to his counsels, is more acceptable than the fat of rams, than the most delectable of human inventions that you can reserve from the fire of his word, as a sacrifice unto the Lord †. Therefore, break through every opposition to follow your Redeemer. Devote yourselves to serve him in the way of obedience, and leave your usefulness to him, who only can make us of real use in his service. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

FIFTHLY, The fear of offending their friends and relations, is a stumbling block to some, and an objection to their submission to this ordinance. This is so weak and trifling, that one would think such are either

* Jer. vi. 16.

† 1 Sam. xv. 22.

then not serious in religion, or that they have never read these awful words of the Lord: "If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple *." If therefore, we can prefer the pleasing of any relation upon earth unto our duty towards God, we have no evidence of being Christ's disciples: nay, he declares expressly, that *we cannot* be his disciples. Consider this matter well, ye who are obstructed in your duty by these fears. Will your relations answer for you at the judgment seat of Christ? Will they be able to excuse you in the day of the Lord? Are they the Lords of your consciences? Have they redeemed your souls? Alas! Alas! you know the contrary full well. Therefore, comply with your duty. Their hearts, their hands, and all they have, are in the hands of the Lord, and he can turn them as he will, and into what channel is best for you too. Be not therefore dismayed. If father and mother forsake you, reject, and disinherit you, for discharging a good conscience, yet the Lord will take you up †." "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken to them more than unto God, judge ye."

SIXTHLY, Others are kept back and overawed from their duty in this matter, on account of the shame and reproach that attend it. Few, indeed, care to express themselves explicitly on this head, because it is so *exceedingly weak and cowardly*; yet from the tenor of their conduct, it evidently appeareth, that they are afraid of hearing the reproach. But what are ye afraid of? The reproaches and revilings of men? The sinful breath of those vile wretches

* Luke xiv. 26.

† Ps. xlvii. 10.

who blaspheme their Maker's name from day to day? Why, do you not know that the spotless, immaculate Saviour, was not only reproached, made the drunkard's song, and scornfully treated as a madman and a devil, by the proud, self-righteous pharisees; but that he cheerfully endured all the sufferings of the cross, and nobly despised the shame, which our sins exposed him unto, in order to obtain our salvation? Why are you afraid of suffering reproach, since that it is your greatest honour? And why would you be ashamed of the best of all interests? You can suffer neither shame nor reproach for Christ's sake, but he suffereth with you. In his cause you can sustain no losses, but he will repay them. "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting." — And how will ye be able to face him another day? Have ye not just reason to fear, that he will then be ashamed of you, and reject you? Trifle no longer, I beseech you, with flesh and blood. "Fear ye not the reproaches of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach."

SEVENTHLY, The only remaining objection deserving any notice, that I have heard of, is, that some persons, not having any prospect of church fellowship, at least such as is orderly, think themselves justified in neglecting it, on this account. But how trifling and weak is such an objection as this? — Are we justified in neglecting one branch of the divine will, because we have not an opportunity of regarding another? Certainly we are not. But on the

the contrary, ought, with all readiness, to make the best use of such ordinances as we have the privilege of observing. The eunuch, treasurer of Candice, the Ethiopian queen, had no prospect of church fellowship in his own country, whither he was going. And yet he never made the least hesitation upon this head. He submitted unto baptism the very first opportunity. For when Philip and he were in the chariot discoursing upon divine subjects, "as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water. And the eunuch said, see here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" No sooner had he professed himself a believer in the Son of God, than "they went both down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." Here is a blessed example, worthy of our imitation! This eunuch is said to have spread the gospel in several parts. And how do you know but your submission to the Redeemer may be a means of spreading the knowledge of his name? Besides, this objection has less weight in it, when we remember, that there are few counties in England, in which there is not an opportunity for such to join with persons of their own persuasion. All these things considered, I hope none that fear the Lord will any longer be prevailed upon to neglect their duty, and live short of their privileges. "And now, why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord."—I come now,

VI. To point forth the folly and danger of neglecting this institution, that none may remain ignorant of the dangerous consequences of their conduct.

FIRST, The folly of such a conduct is very conspicuous in every point of light, more especially if we consider,

consider.—1. That it is our interest and real welfare which we are neglecting herein. To neglect the Redeemer's positive institution is to disregard his authority, and to sin against him. And he assures us, that such persons really injure themselves: "He that sinneth against me, *wrongeth* his own soul." What folly is it to wrong our own souls, to deprive them of the benefit, comfort, and consolation, administered in the ordinances of God's house!—2. The folly of such a conduct is most of all declared, inasmuch as such persons reject the counsel of God. "But the scribes and pharisees *rejected the counsel of God* against themselves, not being *baptized* of him." What folly to reject the counsel of God, of which baptism is a part? to despise, or treat with contempt, the wisdom, power, majesty, and holiness of God, which shine forth herein? All sinners act a foolish part in their wild rebellion against the Lord and his Anointed; and certain it is, that the neglecters of the Redeemer's institutions, fall under the same predicament.—Nor is this folly of a simple nature. It is big with mischiefs of a perilous kind. This brings me,

SECONDLY, To point forth the danger of it. I scarce need remind you, that all disobedience whatever, the neglect of positive institutions not excepted, is surrounded with danger. On whatsoever side we turn our eyes, perils encompass it around. But, in particular—1. The danger of delaying baptism appeareth in our slighting the communion of saints, in order to which, this ordinance is to be previously embraced. In these days of coldness, error, and lukewarmness, the communion of saints, is but little esteemed. It is, however, the greatest privilege of a social nature, that we can enjoy here on earth. "One
K day

day in thy courts, is better than a thousand" elsewhere. Of what a dangerous consequence may it be to neglect these things? It will be well if such persons be not debarred the fellowship of the saints in glory, who neglect it in the militant state. They who are not numbered with them *now*, have no just grounds to expect they will associate with them *hereafter*.——2. The danger of this delay appears, in exposing us to the painful reflections of our own consciences. No wise man would choose to feel the bitter, the painful stings of an accusing conscience, in his last stage. And yet there are some who have felt it. A multitude of other things, carnal reasonings, and an encouraged indifference hereto, may stifle conviction *now*; but depend upon it, your consciences will speak out *another day*. What pain and anguish must it occasion *then*, to be reminded, that *when* health and opportunity were present, these duties and privileges were foolishly neglected, which we shall have no more opportunity to regard! Surely, if you have ever felt the anguish of a *wounded conscience*, you will dread the danger of being exposed to her accusations again.——3. Is it not a dangerous thing to live without practical evidence of our being related to Jesus Christ? Certainly it is: But if in baptism there be a putting on of Jesus Christ*, as there really is, then it undoubtedly follows, that where baptism is not regarded, there is no professional, practical evidence of relation to him. It will be an awful thing another day not to be found in Christ; and I must own, that we appear to have a deceitful confidence about this important subject, if we do not practically and professionally put him on.——4. It is certainly

* Gal. iii. 27.

tainly a dangerous thing to sin against the Saviour of sinners? If they who despised the law of Moses, escaped not without punishment, shall the neglecters of the Redeemer's holy institutions pass with impunity*? How then will you account for your conduct, or how can you think yourselves secure from his frowns, in the daily neglect of his ordinances?—You have no reason to expect the gracious protection of this glorious King, who are not found in the observation of his commandments; nor to expect his sacred presence and his sweet consolations, who neglect to appear among his saints, before him, in Zion. On the contrary, you certainly have just cause for fear, lest, knowing the will of the Lord, and not performing it, ye be beaten with many stripes†.——5. The danger of neglecting this, and other divine ordinances, appears in this, that it is grieving to the Holy Spirit. Of old, “Israel rebelled against the Lord,” among other things, by forsaking the Lord's institutions, and going in the ways of the heathen, whereby they vexed “his holy spirit.” But what did they get by it? Why, the Spirit, instead of comforting, leading, and supporting them, “was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them‡” It is awful enough to have the painful reflections of an accusing conscience; but to have the Holy Ghost to be our enemy, is awful indeed! Do we not continually stand in need of his benign influence and gracious leadings? How then do we expect to bear his frown?——There are several who have laboured under these, and it is to be feared that many still do. The decrease of spiritual gifts, the bondage of mind, and the leanness of soul, under which many labour, ministers perhaps as well as

* Heb. x. 28. † Lu. xii. 47. ‡ Is. lxiii. 10.

as people, are palpable evidences of the Spirit being grieved. It is a dangerous case. Beware of continuing in it. Take heed, lest by trifling thus in divine things, you provoke the Lord, to give you up to a mind void of judgment. Be honest,—and, without any hesitation, act according to the light you have. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”——6. The only thing I shall further notice in this affair, is, that by persisting in such a conduct, we shall expose ourselves to the force of these words, in the day of judgment: “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels*.” But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in Heaven†.” From the force of these words we may now defend ourselves; but in the day of judgment, those artful turns, those flimsy shields, will be of no avail. From the Redeemer’s two-edged sword, brandished with a holy indignation, they cannot preserve us. His words will then be explained in their proper sense, appear in all their majesty, power, and importance, and be directed against their proper objects with that irresistible force, and demonstration, which will spread horror, dismay, and confusion, around all that fall under their condemnation. What a dangerous, what an awful thing then must it be to neglect his institutions, and expose ourselves to the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God? Surely, no person that regardeth the words of our Lord Jesus, will any longer persist in a line of conduct so foolish, so dangerous, so fatal, to their

* Lu. ix. 26.

† Matth. x 33.

their peace, comfort, and prosperity,—so grieving to the Spirit,—and so offensive to the Redeemer!

Having gone through the plan proposed, though I have already trespassed upon your time, yet I cannot conclude without a reflection or two in the method of improvement.

1. Let those of you who are wallowing in sin, and lying under the guilt and pollution of it, remember what an awful state you are in. You are enemies to God, and exposed to his wrath and displeasure. If you die in that estate, you must be surely damned, as you stand or sit there to-day. Let me beseech you to forsake sin, to repent of it, and to turn to God.—“Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” O then, “labour, not for the bread that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.” You have the privilege of hearing the word of God, almost daily; how great will your condemnation be, if in the end you are found unbelievers! Nor will any thing short of an entire change serve to secure you from eternal misery. Sin must not only be left in practice, but your hearts formed a-new to hate it. An inward reformation, as well as an outward one, must have place, or you cannot be saved. Your sins must be pardoned, your persons justified, and your souls sanctified, or you can never enter into the kingdom of God. These are things that none but Jehovah can do. This ought to make you tremble, sinners, when you hear it. Salvation is not a work within the compass of human power. O then, I beseech you, no more trifle with this matter. The Lord Jesus, in all his fulness, grace, and glory, is preached unto you. Receive this blessed message.

Search

Search into the inspired volume. Vile and ignorant as you are, he is able to save you. But if you continue to despise and reject him, you must perish in your folly. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

2. Let all penitent transgressors, howsoever burdened, roll all their burdens upon the Lord, and follow him in the obedience of faith. Your weaknesses, doubts and fears, are no sufficient objection. Take heed that, by poring upon these, you are not losing sight of the Saviour of sinners. Is he not *able to save* you? Is he not *willing to save* you? He is. Why then are ye discouraged in following him? How do you expect comfort and peace, but in so doing? The penitent in my text delayed but a little, a very little; in comparison of what you have done, and yet he met with a cutting rebuke:—"And *now* why tarriest thou?" With how much greater propriety, if so I may speak, may this be applied to many now? No longer indulge yourselves in neglecting his commands.—"Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." Give yourselves up to him and his people, to walk with them in all the order of his gospel, "in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten *."

3. Let all who have been baptized, remember the ends of this institution, and shew them forth. You have professed repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Does it appear that your repentance is genuine, your faith unfeigned? You have been buried with Christ; but, what will this avail any of you, if you are now alive to this world, in love with it, sunk in the lusts and pleasures of it, and walking *again* according to the course of it?—

Alas!

* If. i. 5.

Alas ! alas ! how often has it happened, in every age of the church, unto a race of licentious professors, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire ?" If any such backsliders hear me to-day, I entreat you to remember from whence you are fallen, to repent and do your first works. "Awake to righteousness and sin not." You may attempt to cover your folly, but God will not suffer it long to remain hid. You may attempt the reconciliation of your estate with a state of grace, but without repentance, it will be all in vain. Without repentance for your folly and backsliding you will prove hypocrites and deceivers in the end, who shall receive the greater damnation. "Return, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord ; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you ; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever *."

As for you who have bravely withstood, hitherto, the allurements of the world, see that ye continue so to do. Walk close with your dear Redeemer. Fill up your place in the house of God with reputation and usefulness. Set your affections on things above. Remember what obligation your baptism lays you under, to walk in newness of life. O ! that you may be among those of whom the Redeemer says, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy†."

4. A few words to you, my dear brother, the immediate subject of this ordinance, shall close my discourse at this time. You have resigned a place in a popular connection, merely, from a conscientious re-

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* Jer. ii. 12.

† Rev. iii. 4.

gard to the order and institution of the Lord's house,
 You have known that neither a liberal education nor
 a sacred office, with the prospects of preferments, in
 a worldly sanctuary, are sufficient to excuse us in act-
 ing contrary to the will of God and our own con-
 sciences. Your conduct in this affair will be condemn-
 ed by all the worshippers of mammon; nor will the
 sober, evangelical part of the clergy, in general, look
 upon your proceeding in any very favourable light;
 for this very reason, that by your doing so, they are
 reproached. However, all those who made the Bible
 the *sole rule* of their faith, will applaud you. And,
 what is infinitely more, I believe the Most High, will
 approve of it. Such a singular event as this, general-
 ly excites popular admiration. But, with all due re-
 spect to you, Sir, give me leave to observe, that it is
 your future conduct, which will reflect the greatest
 honour upon this day's transactions; and your pre-
 sent devotion, which will render it most honourable
 to your heavenly Father, and, through his grace,
 comfortable to your self. The solemn profession that
 you are now making, will engage the attention of ma-
 ny, and their opposition to it, will prompt them to
 scrutinize every branch of your conduct, with more
 abundant exactness, than otherwise they would have
 done. Nor will the grand enemy of our salvation be
 less vigilant in tempting, sifting you, so far as he is per-
 mitted. Peculiar watchfulness and circumspection
 are therefore highly needful, with a humble depen-
 dance upon the keeper and preserver of Israel. Be
 firm and immoveable in adhering unto the truths of
 the gospel. To that considerable acquisition of clas-
 sical learning, which you have already obtained, be
 daily making some addition, more especially in divine
 science,

science, and her kindred ones; but at the same be humble, depending upon your Redeemer, and looking unto him for divine strength, all needful gifts for his service, and grace to make a proper use of them. In this line of conduct a man will become *great* in the sight of the Lord and his people, but *low* and *mean* in his own; he will be honourable and useful;—but whatever attainments in the sciences he may acquire, if he be puffed up with them, become less dependent on the Redeemer and his grace, and indifferent about the gifts and influences of the Blessed Spirit, he may be assured that his acquirements are a snare to him, that he is entangled therein, and, without speedy repentance, will become, in the end, contemptible, both in the eyes of God, and of all good men. To these things, I hope, dear sir, you will ever have a due regard, since the glory of our God and King, your usefulness and reputation, as well as the credit, of the interest you now espouse, are involved therein.——

In order to your present comfort in this blessed institution, you are now immediately going to submit to, have your eyes unto the Holy One of Israel. In fervent addresses unto the God of mercy, I now expect your concurrence. In the ordinance itself, properly so called, be meditating upon the *doings, sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection*, of our dear Redeemer, accompanied with *calling upon his name*. In going down into the water, reflect upon his voluntary engagements, his wonderful incarnation, and his deep abasement. In passing through it, call to mind what amazing sufferings he underwent; how he was *baptized in blood*, that we might be *saved from the fire*: look to him as your Surety and Saviour, your Justifier and Sanctifier,—through whose obedience unto death the

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waters

waters of divine grace issue forth in rich abundance unto the everlasting salvation of all true believers.—
 —With a humble recumbency upon him, you will then emerge from the water, viewing your dear Redeemer, as having buried your sins, overcome death, worsted the devil, sweetened the grave, brought life and immortality to light, and go on your way triumphing in his glorious resurrection. In every branch of your conduct pursue the grand ends of this institution, mentioned already, and you may be assured that “the Lord of all peace himself” will “give you peace always by all means,”—in life, in death, and to all eternity.

“ Now unto Him that is able to keep you from
 “ falling, and to present you faultless before the
 “ presence of his glory with exceeding joy,----

“ To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory
 “ and majesty, dominion and power, both now and
 “ ever. AMEN.”

A
H Y M N

COMPOSED BY THE REV. I. SLEE,

AND

SUNG AT HIS BAPTISM.

I.

HOW marv'lous, Lord, are all thy ways;
And how surprizing is thy grace!
Accept us, Father, in thy Son,
In faith and love this work be done:

II.

In faith of Him, who once did lie
In *Jordan's* stream, to sanctify
This Heav'nly ordinance divine,
Wherein the Lord's perfections shine.—

III.

Long time I was in doubt, O Lord,
Till lighten'd by thy glorious word;
With trembling steps I went along,
And *sprinkled**,---- with a fault'ring tongue!

IV.

Human inventions kept me blind,
And darkness hover'd o'er my mind,
Till Heav'nly rays shone from above,
And Jesus cry'd,—“Dost thou me love?”

* Or *Poured*.

V.

I trembled at the dreadful ire,
Which smote two off'ers in the fire;
Bold NADAB and ABIHU's fate
Upon my mind, with horror, fate*.

VI.

Pardon, O Lord, what I have done,
Forgive me, Father, in thy Son:
Grant me thy pard'ning grace to prove,
And sing the triumphs of thy love.

VII.

O JESU, thou hast dy'd for me t,
And shall not I baptized be?
Hast left my sins all in the grave,
From death and hell my soul to save;—

VIII.

Hast sprung victorious up to Heav'n,
Whereby good hope's to sinners giv'n;
Hast wash'd my soul white in thy blood,
And, glorify'd, now art with God.

IX.

In faith and love then me baptize
In this pure fount, and may I rise,
To live by faith and walk in love,
Till I shall tread thy courts above!

* Lev. x. † Gal. ii. 20.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 17. line 1. *read* all his ; l. 17, r. of his ; p. 23, l. 15, *delete* ; p. 24, l. 22, r. ours ; l. 30, r. unto ; p. 25, l. 6, d. I have, and r. even in ; p. 27, l. 23, r. 4 ; p. 29, l. 5, d. to ; p. 30, Note, l. 5, r. so fond ; p. 31, l. 15, r. shunned ; p. 34, l. 6, r. everlasting. From p. 40, to p. 64, r. 41, 47, &c. p. 41, l. 14, d. itself ; p. 43, l. 14, r. washing, l. 16, r. objections, l. 18, r. persisting ; p. 43, l. 24, r. ye ; p. 44, l. 12, r. when he, after his, l. 27, r. divers ; p. 46, l. 21, r. and some of the best Greek writers, p. 52, l. 15, r. *cre-*
uideret ; p. 55, l. 13, d. to ; p. 57, l. 24, r. influence ; p. 58, l. 2, r. should, l. 9, r. St Hermas ; p. 59, l. 25, r. his service ; p. 60, n. l. 6, r. the name ; p. 62, l. 9, d. the ; l. 16, d. not ; p. 64, l. 13, r. believe ; p. 72, l. 19, r. mean ; p. 77, l. 11, r. as surely ; p. 80, l. 11, r. make ; l. 27, r. and lifting.

These are the principal errors, excepting a few in the punctuation, and quotations, which the ingenious Reader will easily correct.

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VIRGIL. *Æneid.* VI. 68.

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